

Hunting

Recollections.

By Miss Tawke.



JOHN A. SEAVERNS

C. Harris

July 11

HUNTING RECOLLECTIONS.



BY

MISS TAWKE,

BULLWOOD HALL, HOCKLEY.

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MISS TAWKE.

PREFACE.

In giving my *Hunting Recollections*, I must beg for the kind indulgence of my readers, and remind them this is my first literary venture—and a very difficult fence I have found it to negotiate. When starting, I intended to give a few hunting anecdotes only, but instead of “a sharp, short burst,” I find I have dropped into a regular, long, slow hunting run with several checks, and if my readers, after getting to the close of this book, care to continue the run, I propose to get on the line as soon as possible; and in our next we shall arrive nearer to the present time.

Before closing the Introduction, I must tell my friends to what the proceeds of the book will be devoted. Some five or six years ago I was instrumental in starting a Home for persons who, for some cause, find it impossible to obtain work; and, after remaining in the Home for a certain time, and proving themselves entitled to a recommendation, situations are obtained for them. As far as the people are concerned, the result has more than met our expectations; and, though the inmates of the Home are employed in laundry work, for various reasons we can never hope to make it self-supporting. Any benefit derived from “*Hunting Recollections*” will go to reduce the debt.

HISTORY OF THE ESSEX UNION HOUNDS.

The first mention of the Hunt was in 1822, when Lord Petre hunted the country. The Kennels were at Thorndon, with temporary Kennels at the Griffin Inn, Danbury for convenience of the outlying district. William Evans being huntsman in 1824, when he was succeeded by Hort. In 1832 Lord Petre migrated to the Puckeridge country, taking Hort as hushman and remaining Master of the Puckeridge for three seasons, and during this period the Essex Union was carried on by Messrs. Brewett and Nash, both of whom lived at Rayleigh, and had the Kennels there for two seasons. I find they were subsequently moved to Crow's Heath, a farm belonging to Mr. Brewitt, at Downham. Mr. Tom Brewitt lived at Down Hall, Mr. Nash at South Benfleet: Meshach Cornwall being huntsman. (There are people of this name still living at Rayleigh—doubtless his descendants.) In 1836 Lord Petre resumed Mastership of the Union country, having purchased the hounds from Mr. Tom Brewitt. Joe Roots was his huntsman, until he gave up in 1839.

For these three seasons Mr. Kemble hunted his own harriers at Runwell, namely from 1836 to 1839.

In 1839 Mr. John Payne (Jun.) was Master and Will Cross huntsman, until the retirement of the former in 1848.

We find in 1839 Mr. John Payne, Jun., kept the hounds. He was an ancestor of John Payne, of Southminster, and lived at Maldon.

In 1848 Tom Ward, in conjunction with Mr. Scratton, became Master. He was brother of George Gepp Ward, of Heybridge Mill, also of Mrs. Townsend. By permission of Mr. Oxley Parker he lived at the Nursery Farm, Woodham Mortimer. Mr. James Parker, who became Master in 1854, was a great uncle of Mr. Christopher Parker, of Faulkbourne Hall.

In 1848 Alfred Causton hunted the South Essex with Joe Bailey as whip, and he combined the duties of kennel, huntsman, stud groom (there was no other), gardener and general factotum to Mr. Causton.

In a letter, dated December 7th, 1867, written by Mr. Daniel Robert Scratton to Mr. Oxley Parker, he says: "Payne gave up in April, 1848."

Ward and myself succeeded him. The huntsman was Jem Morgan. I gave up April, 1853.

The Kennels were at the Hyde, Danbury.

Ward then went on from April, 1851, till his death, Christmas 1852, and I finished the season till April, 1853.

Thomas Lay Ward lived at Woodham Mortimer, next the Grange.

James Parker was Master till April, 1854 (with Will Cross as huntsman, Joe Torrell whip), at which time I resumed the Mastership, and have kept them ever since.

Mr. Scratton retired April, 1869.

SOUTH ESSEX HOUNDS.

In 1848 Mr. Alfred Causton, a yeoman farmer, was Master and hunting the hounds himself. The Kennels were at Mr. Arthur Button's, Walton Hall Farm, Mucking. Whip, Joe Bailey. In 1857 Mr. Arthur Button became Master of the South Essex Hounds. He took the name of Cox on the death of his uncle, Captain Cox, of Harewood Hall, Upminster. Button Cox I have always heard was a thorough sportsman, but a jealous rider to hounds, latterly he was a martyr to rheumatism. When I remember him he was bent almost double; but even then he would ride to hounds, being driven in his cart until the run began, when he was put on his horse, and would go as well as ever. He managed to break his arm, which he flung up when jumping a fence, and this accident ultimately caused his death.

Button Cox was succeeded by Sir Thomas Lennard in 1860. The Kennels were at Belhus, Ransom was huntsman, Joe Bailey whip.

Colonel Kemble tells me he remembers going out with them on one occasion when at home for his holidays.

We must return to the Essex Union Hounds.

The Kennels were at the Hyde, Danbury. Whether Mr. Scratton took the horn himself is an open question. Will Cross hunted them one season, and it seems likely that Mr. Scratton began to hunt them in 1855: First Whip, John Bann, second whip, Will Cross (Jun.). Colonel Kemble says: "I know John Bann hunted them during the Christmas holidays of 1856-7, when Mr. Scratton was laid up with congestion of the lungs." The Kennels had then been moved to Prittlewell Priory.

Charles Shepherd came as huntsman 1st May, 1857. Hagger was first whip.

Mr. Scratton hunted the two countries in the spring of 1861, and this hunt has ever since been known as the Essex Union.

Shepherd left 30th April 1862; was succeeded by Nimrod Long; first whip, Joe Bailey.

Nimrod Long left 30th April, 1864.

Harry Rees was huntsman from April, 1864, till April 30th, 1869. Afterwards he remained on when Mr. John Offin took the Hounds, 1869 till 1873, with Joe Bailey as first whip.

From 1873 till Mr. Offin's death in 1875 Bentley was huntsman.

In 1875 Hunting commenced September 7th.
 Master, Captain W. H. White. Whips, Joe Bailey,
 Joe Sorrell.
 1876 Capt. White. Whips, Joe Bailey, W. Grayson.
 1877 Capt. White. Whips, Joe Bailey, R. Wright.
 1878 Capt. White. Whips, Joe Bailey, James Crook.

- 1879 Capt. White. Whips, Richard Yeo, James Sorrell.
1880. Capt. Carnegy. Whip, George Rae.
1891. Commander Kemble. Huntsman, George Rae.
1894 Mr. Ashton. Huntsman, Goddard.
1895 Col. Hornby. Huntsman, Goddard.
1898. Mr. Helme. Huntsman, A. Thatcher.
1899 Mr. Mashiter. Huntsman, A. Thatcher.
1900. Mr. Mashiter. Huntsman, George Tongue.
1909. Mr. Raymond Courage, Mr. Hexton. Huntsman, George Tongue.
1910. Capt. Heseltine.

For the following lines I am indebted to Miss Augusta Bryant :—

A FOXCHASE WITH THE LATE LORD PETRE.

Awake my muse and chant the lays
Of good old Smiler's sporting days,
When I was young and she was strong,
And we could go the whole day long.
Thorndon her nobles from far did bring,
And her foxhounds made the welkin ring,
When Smiler could skim the brooks and fields
And the meet was fixed for Langdon Hills.
At Northlands Reynard before us stood,
And led us a chase to Rawreth Wood;
But as through the bushes he did glide,
Old Benedict caught him by the side
And held him down upon the ground
Till half the pack did him surround;
They pain'd him sore, and stopp'd his breath,
For Mercy sent a friend—'twas Death.
Then from his rump his brush Joe took,
And gave the cheering death Who-whoop.
Then trotting homeward,—I don't say all—
Were joking with those who had a fall,
For many that day were forced to bow
As the cut down banks oft brought them low.
The sun was setting; that lovely day,
Like earthly pleasures, soon passed away;
Each face was smiling, none wore a frown,

His lordship was pleased, he gave me a crown.
Now Smiler was praised, by man and woman;
She leaped gate and pit at Laindon Common—
She did them well, upon my word,
And brought smiles and praise from Thorndon's lord,
For he said her like could not be found,
Although you searched the country round.
And more than that, I can tell you what,
Thirteen miles an hour she oft did trot,
And many a large one she defied;
Though broken-kneed and single-eyed,
She'd deep ribs, short legs, and full of fire;
And I never knew poor Smiler tire—
She was so good in every pace,
Whether on the road or in the chase.
But hold, my muse, cease rhyme and punning,
For Cross has stopped my Smiler's running;
Yes, Death, that everlasting spoiler,
Has robbed me of my good old Smiler.
But though she's dead and out of sight,
Her fame shall live, my favourite;
Long may her deeds in memory last,
Although her sporting days are past;
And as we tread around life's ball,
Let's know that Death will stop us all.

F.B.

MR. OFFIN.

For the account of the great run which took place in the Union Country, 1856, I am indebted to my old friend, Mr. Offin. I have heard him tell the story so often that I almost feel as if I had been there myself. It seems to have been the usual practice at the end of the season to invite a pack of harriers, kept by one named Fred Preston, to have a day in what is now the Union. By all accounts it must have been the longest hunt that ever

was known in the district. Mr. Lucas, of Basildon, entertained the Field to luncheon, and shortly afterwards a deer was enlarged just below Crays Hill, taking a line through Ramsden Bellhouse to Wickford (when one remembers that in those days there was no railway, no poultry farms, and no wire to interfere, what a country that must have been to ride over). Leaving Wickford on the right, over the brook to Runwell, straight away by Retten-ton on to Woodham, there he turned, and returning over Hyde Hall to Rettendon, on through Hanningfield, by Crows Heath, to Ramsden Heath. North of Forty Acres he turned southwards to Mepes Hole. On again past Crays Church, Great Burstead Church, Little Burstead, over Bottledown Hill, through Blind Lane Shaw—by this time the field was uncommonly select—on and on he goes. Two wheat stacks nearly brought the run to a close. The Park was his point, and away once more over Heron Pond, Lapwater Hall, Ingrave Hall, the Dairy Farm, by Hangman's Lane, and into Thorndon Park by Lion Lodge, Warley Gap. Mr. Offin was the only one left, and still this never-ending run seems as though it will never finish. A race between the horse and the deer, I expect there was not much pace left in either, but the game is not up yet. Back by the Dairy Farm into the Park, out by the "Spotted Dog," Herongate, into the fence they floundered, but the struggle was not over, and once again the deer made an effort to escape, and the next thing that occurred was Mr. Offin,

his horse and the deer all rolling in a heap together. After a run of three hours and twenty minutes the deer was secured and taken into a shed, but I regret to have to add, he only lived a very short time, after his brilliant performance. Of the other two actors, neither of them were any the worse. Mr. Offin walked his gallant horse all the way from Herongate to Down Hall, Rayleigh. History does not state what became of the hounds or the rest of the Field, but we may be pretty sure there were many aching hearts that night. One man must have been thoroughly satisfied with himself and his horse. The latter, he said, he bought of Lord Petre, and he was such an excellent performer, he did not object to jumping single hay-cocks. In any case, he did the work of three that day, and no doubt he rests in peace—where all good horses go.

Measured on the map this run covered twenty-three miles, and the way they went it must have been fully thirty-three miles.

I have to thank Mr. Tom Offin for the accounts of the following runs. They had a good spin (date not known), but supposed to be somewhere about 1852 or 1853, when a straight necked fox was found in Sir Thomas Lennard's coverts at Belhouse, and away they went straight across to Puddledock (many good runs I have had from the covert before that abomination in the shape of wire was thought of, and the land in possession of a people who neither care for nor understand



FINISH OF MR. OFFIN'S GREAT RUN.

the pleasures of the chase). The run proceeded by Dunton, over Bottledown Hill to Heyden Grove and Blounts Wall, crossing the Billericay road by Gooseberry Green to Mill Hill (Here again there is a complete town laid out and streets named—not much more in the road-making line, except the name, but quite enough to interfere with the comfort of the field—I only wish one could put the clock back a bit, and show our hunting friends of to-day what sort of country ours was twenty years or so ago). But on went man and horse, without a check, to the further side of Mill Hill. Hounds were working their fox through the wood; the next thing that happened was, the fox jumped into the ditch near to where Mr. Offin was waiting. Without a moment's pause the latter was off his horse, and into the ditch he went. At this moment the hounds came out of the covert, and man and hounds and fox were all struggling together. The fox had no chance, and it was a proud moment for Mr. Offin (then a youth of seventeen). After breaking up his fox, and with head and brush on his saddle, he started off to find the rest of the field. That Mr. Offin escaped without being bitten by the hounds, is a circumstance which is very remarkable.

Three men, Cobb, Stunt, and Lake, were in the habit of crossing from Kent every Tuesday and Saturday to hunt with the Union—and rare good men they were, and took some beating too. There was at that time a fox in Norsey Wood (unlike the foxes of to-day) he used to break

without a moment's delay, and, greatly to the satisfaction of the three men of Kent, he always ran the same line, which ended at Purfleet Chalk Pits, where they lost him—until one day when there was a burning scent, away went Mr. Fox, as usual over Bulphan. Here hounds threw up, but Mr. Offin was on his tracks, and came upon the "gentleman," his loud holloa brought the hounds, and so ended the Norsey fox, who had taken the three men of Kent home with very little inconvenience to themselves.

In 1854 a brace of foxes were afoot in Arnolds, the pack divided, and Mr. Offin tells the tale of how he went away with half the hounds and killed his fox on Kelvedon Common having run him into a wood-stack, which he pulled down, and when he got to the last layer, there he saw his "friend," but his subsequent experience was unique, he came up with the other half of the pack and saw them kill their fox three miles beyond Ongar.

Mr. Offin always says he never rode horses up to his weight; but they were well-bred ones, and he liked a free goer. Once he was mounted on a horse called "Freemason" when they found in the Plantations, Hadleigh; and, running in a north-easterly direction, Mr. Offin jumped the brook below Eastwood Lodge. To those who know the place, I need not describe what a bold man and horse is required to take on the job, and I cannot remember having seen anyone tackle it in that spot. After crossing the brook, they went straight through the Bull Woods and

killed on Hull Bridge Marshes.

Mr. Offin had a horse named "Don," bred from a mare, belonging to Sir Charles Smith, the sire was the property of Frank Barker, winner of twenty-eight steeplechases. Don took some riding. One day, when hounds were running hard, he jumped smack into the river west of Battlesbridge. It was a toss up if either man or horse would land in safety. Both scrambled up the bank unharmed (to the initiated the feat will be appreciated. Two or three times I have managed to cross the river, and very horrid it was. One must have a thoroughly confidential animal. To negotiate it he slides down on his tail and crawls up the opposite bank on his stomach. To-day, thanks to Colonel Kemble, we have the good causeway, which he had made, and a very great comfort it is, and we never fail to thank him in our hearts when the necessity arises to cross the river).

Another of Mr. Offin's runs will I give you. The find was in Roper's Shaw, and after taking four rings round Laindon Hills, Mr. Offin having jumped the Stanford brook, came upon his fox quietly sitting in a furrow. Our gallant sportsman galloped alongside of the fox up to the high road; there he roared to some men to stop him, but without effect, so on they flew, till they reached the Rookery (where Mr. Asplin lived). Hounds had frequently thrown up in the same place before (doubtless there was a conve-

nient drain, known of amongst foxes), but Mr. Offin was determined, if possible, to catch the one in front of him that day, and, as luck came in his way, a maid servant was standing at the door to see the hunt, so he shouted to her to prevent the fugitive from turning into the welcome shelter of the yard, with the result that he was headed, jumped the opposite fence, ran for two fields and was rolled over. Yet one more of Mr. Offin's exploits I must tell you of. A fox came out of Gusted Hall Wood and went away across the big pasture at the back of the Lawn, making for Potash Wood. Said Mr. Offin to Mr. Kemble, "Shall I catch him before he gets to the covert?" and he galloped away, caught the fox between his horse's fore legs and up went the fox high into the air.

MR. SCRATTON

was born October 2nd, 1819, and he lived with his parents at Milton Hall (which is now a large Roman Catholic Institution for the reception of destitute persons). Mr. Scratton was the only son, he had two sisters, both of whom died unmarried. Educated at home and at Exeter College, Oxford, on the death of his father, John Baynton Scratton, Mr. Daniel Robert succeeded to the property, including Milton Hall, Prittlewell Priory, and several other estates around Southend which was at that time a watering place much patronised by the select county families and even by Royalty. Princess Charlotte spent a great deal of time there, and I have often heard my grandmother

say how, as a girl, she used to go and stay on the Royal Terrace—and Southend never lost its charm for her. A long and valuable stretch of foreshore belonged to Mr. Scratton, and he employed men and boys to gather oysters and winkles for the London markets. He was an experienced agriculturalist, and took a keen interest in public affairs.

J.P. for the County, D.L., and Chairman of the Board of Guardians, a first-rate coachman, for some time he ran the ordinary passenger coach (himself not unfrequently driving) between London and Southend, afterwards when the Great Eastern Railway came as far as Brentwood, the passengers were landed at the Station to continue their journey by rail to London. On the resignation of Mr. James Parker Mr. Scratton bought the hounds, built the kennels at the Priory, and in 1861, when Sir Thomas Leonard retired from the Mastership of South Essex Hounds, he united the two countries, and they have remained so since that time. Tradition says the country reaches from White Chapel Church to Bradwell-on-Sea. The only lines of railway, were the Great Eastern, which ran by Chelmsford, and the London and Tilbury, going along the marshes to Southend (No need then for railway keys, or even for Mr. Russell to jump his gallant grey in and out of the railway fence—over a good five feet of timber).

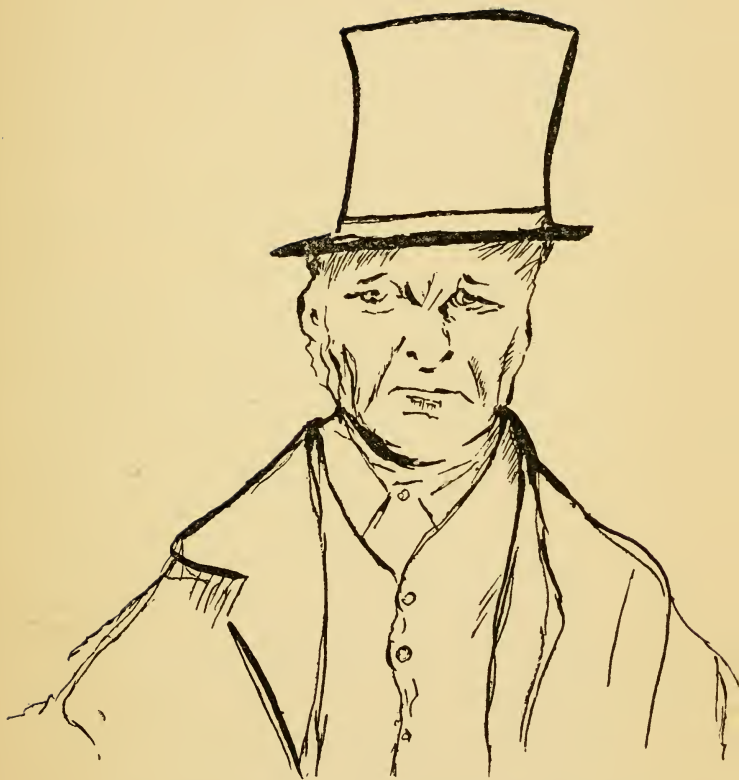
Mr. Scratton had a hound van which at one time was the property of Mr. Assheton Smith, and when the meets were wide, with four horses

in the van, he used to convey the hounds to the fixture. Essex was considered one of the best scenting plough countries, and I maintain that we were better off when the land was kept in a high state of cultivation, than as it is to-day with a great deal more pasture, and straggling fences.

For nineteen years Mr. Scratton's reign lasted and then, to the surprise and regret of everyone, he sold the hounds. Yet more was to follow—he parted with most of his Essex property, bought an estate and settled in Devonshire. His departure caused a gap which has never been filled—but every cloud has a silver lining, and so it is in this case, and quite recently one of the clan has purchased the Priory, and, better still, come to live there, and I don't think I am far wrong in saying the cloak of Daniel Robert has certainly fallen on one member of the family.

I am indebted to Commander Kemble for many of the foregoing details. There is one well known story that Mr. Scratton used to tell against himself, and that was, when he went into a shop to buy some horse rugs—the man took him for the groom and offered him a commission which he quietly put in his pocket—his personal appearance, as I remember him, might well lead one into the mistake.

I give the account of a run which took place many years ago. For years past the Lawn had been a favourite fixture, and the foxes used to fly in all directions. I well remember (says Mr. Jackson, to whom I am



MR. DANIEL ROBERT SCRATTON, M.F.H.

indebted for the particulars) upon one occasion we found in the adjoining wood, called Potash, and raced our fox by Cherry Tree Farm, West Barrow Hall, Rochford Hall, to ground at our Rector's, got him out; then drew Hockley Bullwood, out by Hawkwell Common, past Clements Hall, for Trinity Wood, out of which we raced him for Fambridge Marshes, on for Norpits and Rapits Farm and Cricksea, to Loftman's, and killed him by moonlight on Clements Marshes.

The following lines are contributed by Miss Augusta Bryant:—

THE LANGDON MEET.

All hail to Langdon, whose ancient hills
The mind of a sportsman with ardour fills;
Where clarion's heard from neighb'ring cocks
Are wont to tempt the prowling fox;
Where Peer and Cit with the country squires,
To the name of sportsman each aspires;
Where the well-bred hunter and genuine hack,
Oft come to meet that unrivalled Pack.
Yes, Priory's Pack with joy we hail
Thy tuneful notes over hill and dale.
Now the Lady Pack's here so smart and prim,
Reece and Joe Bayley will keep them in trim;
As soon as in covert they'll snuff up the gale,
And little Miss Comfort will soon tell the tale—
For Comfort and Bentinck are most in their glory,
Tho' strange it may seem, when there's truth in their
story.

They're a couple so rare, their deeds run so high—
This I've been informed, that they ne'er told a lie.
But, hark to the find, for Reece winds his horn,
Bold Reynard must pace o'er the newly-drilled corn,
He'll soon break from covert, he'll find he can't stay.
There's the glad sound—away, gone away, gone away!
See under the hedgerow, how swiftly he goes,
As instinct has taught him to hide from his foes;
He's hard pressed behind, beset all around;

The earths are all stopp'd, and he can't go to ground,
Ploughmen so heedless stop his forward track,
And thus poor old Reynard is oft driven back;
While chattering jays on fluttering wing
Glad tidings to all of his whereabouts bring,
With hounds on his line, and all in full cry,
The open again—once more he must try.
Hasty and Crafty will prove it all whim,
They are too hasty and crafty for him.
Again, then, he breaks, and now goes away,
And see how he strides across the grass ley,
With the hounds at his brush, pursuing amain,
While echoing woodlands prolong the refrain.
How anxious the field, how fiery each steed;
Famous for fencing as well as for speed,
There's our worthy Master, the Prittlewell Squire,
Who to keep all things right is his sole desire,
With his cap all awry, his sportsmanlike seat,
His breeches and boots inexpressibly neat;
He's mounted right well—he has a good Chance,
If his hounds get a run his horse sure will advance.
There's A. Z. Cox on his fam'd chestnut Charley,
Who ne'er at a fence will stop to hold parley;
There's one from the City who keeps a straight line,
Tho' riding a Shadow or famous Sunshine;
T. K.'s a keen sportsman, altho' he dispenses
In a trifling degree with some of his fences;
He sticks to the hardways, as tho' he forebodes
A view at old sharpnose while crossing the roads.
When E. T. can get out he goes well on his grey—
May he from the gout be e'er distant a day.
There's one that goes well on the flea-bitten grey,
Who always has Courage to go the right way;
A friend sometimes with him—not always, of course,
And when he does come he can Marshall his horse.
But my pen from my hand hapily might fall
If I should attempt at the placing them all.
There's Cottons and Saunders, and others as good
As e'er crossed a fallow or rode through a wood:
Joe on young Braxted, Reece on grey Hitchin,
Whose fingers for Reynard so often are itching—
Now hark to halloa, they're at him again,
Not long above ground can he now remain,

For his lugs and his brush are beginning to droop,
 Soon the Welkin will ring with the Huntsman's Whoop
 Whoop.

Now he shortens his strides, to death he'll soon yield—
 See, Daphne and Dian's pull'd him down in the field,
 They'll soon break him up and his bones they'll soon
 crush,

While some are awaiting his beautiful brush.

Now he dies, without murmur or sign sent to Heaven,
 As his crimes are forgotten, may our sins be forgiven;
 Now the death scene is over their thoughts they'll soon
 smother,

In drawing fresh coverts in hopes of another.

FREDK. BRYANT.

Miss Bryant says—

“A few lines of my late sister's have just
 come into my head which she composed on my
 winning the high jump of *over seven feet* at the
 Agricultural Hall, Islington:—

Fearless and bold, she yet her steed restrains,
 And guides, with firm light hand upon the reins;
 O'er hedge and brook she goes with flying leaps,
 But safe possession of her saddle keeps;
 Patient and calm, but should her horse refuse
 To take the leaps, she then her whip can use,
 And urge him on amid the deafening cheers
 Bursting alike from commoners and peers.

“I won this high jump on a horse I had
 never seen before.”

RUN WITH THE ESSEX UNION,

December 19th, 1866.

Met at Wickford Castle, trotted on to
 Kemble's Gorse, found and went away over the

Hills, leaving Rettendon Place on the left, down to Battles Bridge Creek, on to the right over Wickford Bridge to the Church, to the right to Nevendon over to Archer's Farm, to Crays Hill, down the Hills to Meeps Hole, Norsey and Forty Acres, Great Blunts to Bridges, Thurston Hall, Mole Hill Common, Margaretting, Killigrews, through Hylands Park, Widford Hall, Writtle oil Mills, through Mr. Porter's plantations, then to Mr. Christy's, at Broomfield Hall. Blew hounds off when in full cry, with horses tired. Time, three hours forty-five minutes.

Miss A. C. Bryant rode a three-year-old colt from start to finish.

Both horses and riders were hospitably entertained by the then T. D. Ridley, Esq., of The Elms.

Joe Bailey was riding "John Brown," which had to be left at Mr. Turner's, Baddow House, for the night. Reece was on "Raley." The Master, Mr. Scratton, on "Lincoln."

I am indebted to Miss Augusta Bryant for the above.

CAPTAIN WHITE.

Captain White began his reign in the Essex Union Country in 1875, and resigned 1880. He hunted the Essex and East Essex, and only gave up that county in 1876. He was therefore for one season hunting both packs, and doing the work of two men. I always say,

on looking back to those days, they were by no means the least enjoyable times with the Essex Union; horses were not of the best, neither were the hounds, but to Captain White bad horses made no difference; he was one of the finest horsemen I ever met with, and I believe he could have ridden a hurdle across country; brutes no one else would have dreamt of tackling behaved as angels in his perfect hands. One of his sayings was, "Give me my own spurs and another man's horse," but when he was sailing over a country on "Tommy Dodd," or his favourite little grey, it was a sight worth going a mile or two to see. He used to go from covert to covert at a tremendous pace, and on a bad scenting day he would call out "If we can't hunt a fox you shall hunt me." He made no secret of the fact of the hounds keeping *him*.

I shall always feel grateful to Captain White for many a hint as to the best and shortest way of riding to hounds, and his lessons I have never forgotten. One was, always to keep down wind of hounds, and another thing, it was a great advantage to me to be allowed when hounds ran to follow him, the understanding between us being, that if I rolled into a ditch, one of the hunt servants would set me straight. Captain White had a selection of the choicest language one is often privileged to hear. One day he was a bit put out with the second whip: he ended up a whole string of abuse with "I wish you were dead, and it would give me the greatest pleasure to go to your funeral."

On Saturday, April 11th, 1880, there was a good day from the Bull Wood, Hockley, running a fox for two hours, through the Hadleigh coverts, back to Bull Wood, and lost Found again in Merrylands and after running, lost him just below Rayleigh. I got a letter I was away in Leicestershire at the time) from the Master, in which he says: "You will be pleased to hear we have had three really good days. Tuesday, you know; Wednesday, a famous run and kill in the open. Yesterday, one hour and upwards with our second fox, and from scent to view and roll over in the open, making two brace in three days, and a good run with each of them. To-morrow at Danbury, Wednesday Hadleigh, to close the season, and a meet each day after that at twelve in Rotten Row." In another letter he goes on to say: "A hunt meeting took place at Chelmsford, when it was made known that Captain Carnegy would hunt the County next season." On April 30th he wrote again, "Captain Carnegy is coming to stay with me at the end of next week, and if you have not already deserted the Lawn for Hyde Park, I was thinking I would drive him round one day and show him your country. Could you manage to ask a few of your Rochford neighbours to drop in, so that Captain Carnegy could be introduced to them?"

After a season's rest, Captain White took the East Kent country, but I do not think he kept it more than one season. His health had begun to fail before he left us. We were riding to a meet and we passed Mr. Coope.

Captain White remarked, "What would that man give to have my health and strength," and from that time till his death Captain White was never well. He suffered terribly with his liver. It only shows how dangerous it is to boast.

One day he had the misfortune to fall into a marsh ditch in the Bradwell country, and he said he was obliged to stand on his head on a gate post to let the water drain out of his boots, and his clothes had to hang on the line for a month airing, and even after that it was weeks before they lost the terrible perfume of the marsh ditch. Tradition has it this was the last place where the waters subsided after the Flood—some say they have never subsided even to this day.

On the days when he was hunting in the Rochford country he often managed to leave off near The Lawn. He knew he would always find a hearty welcome. One evening, after thoroughly enjoying a repast of Irish stew, he got on to a "hireling," which early in the day bolted with me. "Now," he said, "You can run away with me all the way to Billericay if you like." (With his usual kindness he had noticed my uncomfortable position, and let me ride his second horse, a most perfect hunter called "All-Fours," and which he afterwards sold to Miss Helme.)

I cannot do better than close my account with giving a few extracts from the excellent report of "Dandy White," taken from Bailey's, 1910:—

"In the days when the first gentleman of

Europe sat weightily on the throne of England, Mr. William Inman White, son of a Yorkshire Squire, emigrated south, and made what turned out to be a most judicious purchase, of a property, known as Ribsmore, at Cheshunt, in Hertfordshire, and there, on June 15th, 1829, was born his eldest son, William Henry White, the subject of this brief memoir. As became his Yorkshire origin, Mr. William Inman White was a lover of the horse, and the taste was transmitted to his sons, the eldest of whom was known to the end of his life as "Billy." After a private education, he entered the Militia, and obtained a captaincy in the 3rd Lancashire Regiment. Though lacking none of the qualifications of a good officer, he was ambitious of command in the hunting field rather than on the Parade Ground, and in later life he preferred not to assume his military title. His opportunity came in 1857, when, in his twenty-eighth year, he accepted an invitation to take the Mastership of the Stag Hounds established at the fashionable Spa at Cheltenham, immortalised by Surtees (as some believe) under the name of Handley Cross. The pack was patronized by Lord Fitzharding, but that famous sportsman's career had come to a close, for, after maintaining his foxhounds in princely style for half a century, he had been incapacitated by a fall in the hunting field. Early in September the ex-Captain took up his quarters in Cheltenham at the Queen's Hotel, bringing with him, as he records in his hunting diary, his chestnut horse "Colonel," and two greyhounds. On the

day after his arrival he bought another hunter for twenty-five sovereigns, borrowed a third, and engaged a huntsman and whipper-in. Next day he tells how he rode over the first wall he ever jumped. The opening Meet, postponed in consequence of the death of Lord Fitzharding, took place at Andoversford on October 20th, in the presence of a field of 150 riders. It was not without some misgivings that the new Master gave the word to enlarge. However, a run of two hours was obtained. But it was as a fox hunter in the Eastern Counties Dandy White was destined chiefly to distinguish himself. He only remained with the Cheltonians for one season, and then came eastwards to assume control of a pack of Foxhounds which during the previous half century had hunted a district at first confined to the borders of Essex and Suffolk, but extended before the close of that period northward to the centre of the latter county. The summons upon which he came out of the West was due to the retirement of Mr. Carrington-Quinn, a wealthy banker of Manningtree, by whom it is said the Hunt had been originally founded.

The new Master took up his abode at Stratford House, and the pack was kennelled at Stratford St. Mary. For the first two seasons professional huntsmen were engaged, the Master's first experience of hunting the hounds himself being gained on December 4th, 1860. In consequence of an accident to his huntsman in 1865 he handed over the country to Mr. Nunn, nephew of the late Mr. Carrington Nunn.

Then came a break of four years, after which he resumed office as Master of the East Essex Hounds on the resignation of Mr. Humphrey R. G. Marriott, of Abbots Hall, Stratford, by whom, and his father before him, the county had been hunted for two years. During the first five seasons of this Mastership, 1869-74, the hounds were always hunted by the Master, and were out three days in the week. From the sixth season, 1874-1875 onward, the number of days was five days a fortnight, but the Master's task, instead of being lessened, was soon gravely increased, for, on the resignation in 1875 of Lord Petre's tenant and friend, Mr. Thomas William Offin, Mr. White, whilst continuing in office with the East Essex, undertook in addition to hunt Mr. Offin's country, which, having in earlier days been divided between two packs of hounds, has since Captain White's succession been known as the Essex Union Hunt. The Kennels of the two packs, one near Braintree and the other near Billericay, were not far short of twenty miles apart. Mr. White achieved the task of hunting the entire county for four seasons.

In 1880 he gave up the reins of office to Captain Carnegie, of Lour. The retiring Master was now in his fiftieth year, and after one season with the East Kent he retired into private life in 1882, though his love of sport continued to the end of the chapter. On March 15th, 1909, he wrote in a letter, "My work is done." Two months later, within a month of his eightieth birthday, Old Billy went to ground

with the parting words, "I have seen many a fox die and they always die mute. I am not going to throw my tongue because my time has come."

He was a grand specimen of a sportsman and a gentleman.

On March 30th, 1881, a party of us went to Champion Lodge Steeplechases. Had the pleasure of seeing Captain White win on Tommy Dodd.

I enjoyed many of the following runs, but my knowledge of the country was so slight, and my education far from complete as to names of coverts, for many of the accounts I have been obliged to rely on cuttings from *The Field*, or to the assistance of old friends.

Saturday, November 27th, 1875.

Meet: Stock Street.

I have to thank Mr. Mashiter for the following records.

Found in the Forest and had a pretty thirty-five minutes, to ground in Norsey, fox going by way of Brett's cover, Lillystone, and as if for Mill Hill, but turning left-handed, ran him across to Norsey. Found again in Temple Grove, ran him up to Galleywood race course, where he turned back and through Temple Grove again, smartly, from here they stuck for forty minutes to their fox and killed him down in the open near Runwell Hall, going through Horndon on the way. A perfect fifty minutes from find to finish, hounds never assisted at all,

and taking a beautiful line over the Hanningfield's.

Tuesday, February 1st, 1876.

Meet: North Ockendon.

Went to draw some hedgerows on Sturgeon's Farm between South Ockendon and Stifford. Put a fox off a hedgerow near South Ockendon, who gave us one of the finest runs ever seen in the Essex Union country—twenty minutes racing from where we found him to Franks, by way of Puddle Dock—from Franks, and slower hunting, up to Warley Gap, going through Codham Hall and Magpie Wood from Warley Gap, through Hart's Woods, and across Artichoke Common to Brockley Grove. From here over the open (not touching Arnold's) into the Essex country at Fitzwalters. Here, getting on better terms with their fox, they sent him along as if for Thoby, but turned back, ran nearly to Mountnessing village and killed in the open near Fitzwalters.

Saturday, February 26th, 1876.

Meet: The Fortune of War.

Found directly in Roper's Shaw, ran a ring round by Basildon, back within a field of Roper's Shaw, and then away through Leigh, Chapel Combe Wood, Bushy Lees, Northlands and Martin's Hole, sank the hill here and crossed the railway, running very prettily down to Corringham Village, and lost him between there and Stanford, a good hunting run of one

hour and twenty minutes. Found again in the open between Bushy Lees and Horndon-on-the-Hill, ran up to the hills through Combe and Hall Woods, and away to within a field of Dunton Hall. Here, turning left-handed, ran as if for Puddle Dock, but turning again left-handed up wind, they got to and fairly raced their fox all over the open country between Dunton and Horndon-on-the-Hill, running him underneath a shed in Roper's Farmyard. Time, one hour and five minutes.

Saturday, January 6th, 1877.

Mr. Mashiter described this as a good day; and so it was, I remember it very well.

Meet: Stock Street.

Found in the Forest, ran smartly to Margaretting, a longish check here, but hit him off again on the railway embankment. Ran prettily across the high road as if for "The Hyde," but turning to the right, took our fox into and through Writtle Park Wood, pointed as if for "Skreens," but turned again right-handed, and away to Chignel and lost him between there and Mashbury. A very good hunting run one hour and fifty minutes—first ten minutes to Margaretting racing. I don't think it is in the least likely we changed foxes, as Writtle Park Wood was the only cover they touched and they never left the line there.

During the run Jane (the mare I was riding) made a mistake, and we both subsided into a ditch. Jane extricated herself before I had time to get clear, the result was, when I

discovered exactly what had occurred I found myself hanging head downwards, with the mare cantering down the field, and with a big fence in front of us. Fortunately Jane was prevented from carrying out her intention of negotiating the obstacle. Old Joe Bailey, the whip, caught her, and set me free from a very awkward situation. The only result was, my hat was kicked to atoms and I was obliged to finish the day and ride home without one.

Tuesday, January 8th, 1878.

Meet: Laindon Hills.

Found in the Heronry, ran a ring round by Mucking Gorse, and on to the Marshes and back to ground just above the Heronry—a pretty twenty minutes' spin. Another fox from Mucking Gorse went to ground in the same place after a ten minutes' gallop. Drew Mucking Gorse again and found a straight-necked 'un, ran him very fast up to Hangman's Woods, hounds never dwelling for a moment. A slight check here, but soon hit him off again. Ran him up to Stifford Clays, crossing the road between Stifford and Baker Street, and all over the open country (a beautiful line) to within three quarters of a mile of Puddle Dock, turned back over Bulphan and Orsett Fens, and killed him after as good a run of one hour and five minutes as anyone could wish for, in the open near Mr. Sturgeon's Farm at South Ockendon. The first twenty-five minutes very fast, and the remainder of the run hounds went fast at times.

Saturday, February 23rd, 1878.

Meet: Wickford Castle.

Found in one of Mr. T. Kemble's covers, and after a quick thirty minutes round by Foxearth Moor Gardens, killed him near South Hanningfield Church. Found again in Well Wood, a rare good fox, and had a splendid run (one hour and ten minutes) to Danbury Park and killed him going across to Moor Gardens, and through Mr. Kemble's cover, turned sharp to left and over a fine open country, leaving the "Plough and Sail" on the left, and as if for the Glebe Wood (but skirted it) and away to Danbury Common, through it, and pulled him down in the open close to the palings at Danbury Park. The first half-hour racing. I never saw a yard of it after they left the Runwell covers, as I got a fall and lost a stirrup leather, and the time I lost threw me out. Miss Helme out on "Ballyhaise"; she rode well, and got the brush.

I remember this run as being first-rate.

FIRE AT THORNDON HALL.

The day after this great fire the Meet was at Herongate, and Captain White, out of respect to Lord and Lady Petre's feelings, decided not to chance hounds running through the Park, so we trotted right away to Stock; but imagine our feelings when we found, and the fox brought us straight back through the Park, and past the still smouldering mansion. It is a fact. But

undoubtedly foxes are the most mischievous animals possible, and seem to know where they are not wanted, and take a special delight in going there. Should a funeral be anywhere handy which it is particularly desired to avoid, Mr. Fox is bound to make that his point.

THE SOUTHEND CHEMIST.

He was the son of a Gloucestershire farmer which perhaps accounted for his love of the chase, and also for the fact that he was a first-rate man with hounds, and knew exactly where to go and how to get there—and many a gate have I seen him fly over; but it was quite a shock to meet him in his Southend shop (and one could hardly believe that the man in a long black frock coat, with the smooth soft manner natural to all chemists when they are recommending some particularly effective pills) was the ardent sportsman of a few days previously.

Once upon a time we were crossing Creek-sea Ferry at low water, when your only means of arriving on terra firma after leaving the boat is to be carried on the backs of the watermen. What possessed our friend to loose his hold round the man's neck I am at a loss to say; but certain it is that this is what he did, with the result of finding himself flat on his back in the water. We were horrified, as we moved in slow procession through the water, to see our Chemist suddenly disappear; and so ended his hunting for the day. History does not relate how he was received on his return home. He



LEAVING THE FERRY BOAT AT CREEKSEA.



COLD BATH IN THE CROUCH.

had a most devoted wife, and if he was an hour or so late she suffered agonies. On one occasion he had a fall, and damaged his hat; he was obliged to buy a new one for fear his accident should be discovered.

An Account of a Day with the Duke of
Beaufort's hounds, given by
Mrs. Tawke, aged 93.

About seventy years ago, when I was living with my father and mother, in Bath, on one fine mild morning in November I walked from home to breakfast at a friend's house at eight o'clock. Her husband was in a cavalry regiment (and they were spending their leave in Bath), having brought with him three chargers which he hunted with the Duke of Beaufort's hounds.

My horse came from a good livery stable, where many people staying in Bath for the winter kept their hunters.

We had a very long ride to the Meet, passing Lansdowne, arriving just in time. There was a very large field.

I must now give you a description of my friend. She was tall and handsome, with a very elegant figure, and quantities of fair hair very loosely dressed. She was quite unaccustomed to riding, and sitting rather as one may say on "tip-toe." The habit was very long and the skirt full, and looking below the waist it was quite evident that she had not removed her

ordinary garments. She wore a lovely hat and long white feather. My friend (to my great regret) was advised by her husband to return home before they found.

A fox was soon on foot, and away they went, and as we saw the last rider disappear, my friend was seized with a sudden impulse to follow. She called out to me: "Come on Augusta," and off she went, the groom and I following. We soon came to a small bank; on the far side of which was a very heavy ploughed field: over this obstacle she flew. I saw the figure toppling and toppling, and at last, quite unable to recover herself, off she came, was flung over her horse's head, and landed in the ploughed field some yards away—and there we found her seated. She was quite unhurt, but terribly crestfallen. I was choking with laughter at the spectacle she presented: the lovely hat and long white feather had flown away, the beautiful hair hanging down her back. The skirt, which had got much out of place, displayed fine frilled petticoats; her small feet in shoes—with sandals—and the white open-worked stockings plastered with mud!

I held her horse while she got on, and rode back to Bath, not feeling in the best of spirits at my disappointment, and the sorry sight we presented as we rode through the most fashionable streets of Bath—just as the *beau monde* was taking a morning airing.

After this unfortunate beginning, I had many pleasant days with the Duke of Beaufort's hounds.



MRS. TAWKE, AGED 93.

MR. KEMBLE.

Mr. Kemble, of Runwell Hall, was one—I may say the last—of the old country squires in the county. I am at a loss to describe him as he deserves. He was a thorough sportsman in every sense of the word (the very name of his house reminds one of hunting), and then he was a most perfect gentleman. You have only to read the fifteenth Psalm if you want to find the truest description of the word. Always ready to do a kindness to anyone, with a keen sense of humour; but his platform was the hunting field; he knew the game all round, a wonderful knowledge of the country and the run of a fox, enabled him to see the best of most runs. He always had one or other of his daughters with him, and their unselfish devotion to their father earned the sincere admiration of everyone. One afternoon the Hunt train was on its return journey from Southminster. We were packed in the carriage like sardines. The old squire, according to his usual custom, was taking home a basket of fish. We were gradually alive to the fact that there was the most horrid smell, and from no apparent cause. The train began to slow up for Battlesbridge. Mr. Kemble suddenly remembered his fish. It had disappeared, and was nowhere to be found. His disappointment was great. Besides fish there was in the basket a couple of wild duck. The whole company in the carriage were convulsed with laughter when, on his getting up, there was

the basket flat—he had been sitting on it!

How he enjoyed viewing a fox away, and what a treat it was to hear his cheery voice. I saw him for the last time on the last day of the season. He could no longer ride, but, wrapped up in a cloak, he was driving about most of the day, and just as I was contemplating going home, he called out, “I shall be greatly obliged if you will ride round those two rough fields and see if there is a fox. I think there is one there.” Of course I went at once, delighted to do his bidding. That was the last time I saw him.

I am indebted to Captain Kemble for the details of the following:—

Meet, Woodham Ferris Street, Thursday, February 16th, 1893. Drew Woodham Hall Wood, found at once and went away through Ffolkes, Jacklets, to Hawes Wood, and on through Caney, then to the left by Flambards; there was a brace of foxes in front of hounds. Stuck to one, which took us back over Edwin’s Hall, when the hounds threw up. Held them right forward over the fields below Woodham Ferris, by Flambards, on to the big drain in the railway cutting, not being able to hit him off, we were trotting away to draw Wright’s Ley, when there was a holloa on the railway by Woodham Ferris Station. Had a nice spin up to Stow Mary’s Rectory, when the fox was viewed by the Parson, the Rev. R. Collings, crawling in at the window of his greenhouse. The Parson went in by the door to evict him; the fox jumped through the glass on the opposite side and was

killed in the Parson's garden, close to the fowl-house, where, doubtless, he had found many a good supper, as he evidently knew his way about. When killed the fox was as stiff as a poker, showing what a warm time he must have had. The pate and brush were presented to the old squire, February 16th, 1893, being his seventy-eighth birthday. And what I think is quite worthy of record is that on February 15th, 1894, the day before his seventy-ninth birthday, a similar presentation was made to Mr. Kemble, and at the same place, namely, Stow Rectory. After this interlude, I will pass on to the account of the run—I put the finish before the start—but, like many novel readers, I could not resist looking at the end first. Well, here it is. Drew Mundon Furze, Hazeleigh Hall and Hanging Wood—blank. Found in the Hyde, Danbury, after one turn round the covert went away at racing pace through Slough House, Parsonage Wood, Hazeleigh Hall, and on up to Purleigh Church, where there was a check. Hit him off, and marked him to ground in a drain by the railway. Spot, the terrier, bolted him. After a bit of a ring, he went away by Purleigh, round Bush, Wright's Ley, and into the drain by Stow Rectory, it being a 12-inch pipe. Furrier (a hound) followed and bolted him, and, as I before said, the pate and brush were presented to Mr. Kemble, making the second time he got a birthday gift that he would doubtless appreciate.

There was a time during the run when I found myself in the very proud position of being

alone with George Rae. We were racing down the hill to the Parsonage Wood, George flung open the gate at the bottom, and my horror can be imagined when I saw it shut to immediately after he had gone through. Added to that, Margaret, my mare, had got the bit well behind her tooth. Fortunately the mare soon decided what was the only thing to be done, and did it, and we landed safely.

One day a fox had gone to ground in the Scrubbs, and we were all standing round, waiting to know what was going to be done, when up bounced the owner of —— Hall, a short stout lady, very red in the face.

“What right have you here, I should like to know?”

Mr. Kemble came forward, and in his most courteous manner said:

“None whatever, madam. We only ride about here through your kind indulgence.”

The lady strutted off defeated.

CHARLES TABOR.

If I tried to tell you one half of Charles Tabor's clever sayings, I should fill my book. It must have been when I was about seven years old, I remember seeing him for the first time; he had come to live at Rochford Hall and manage his uncle's farm. My brother and Charles were ferreting. When I came upon the scene ready to help, they had just taken a live rabbit out of the net and I wanted to keep it; Charles said he should kill it. I was furious and called him a

“nasty beast,” and he never forgot to remind me of our first meeting. He became a most valued friend, and it would be impossible to express the terrible blank his death caused in our circle.

One evening when he went home after hunting, he told his boy to put his boots on the trees.

“Yessir,” replied Jack, who had only just taken on the job of valet.

It was a pouring wet night and, when Mr. Tabor looked out in the morning, there were his boots hanging on the trees outside the window.

“Jack, you rascal, what have you been up to with my boots?”

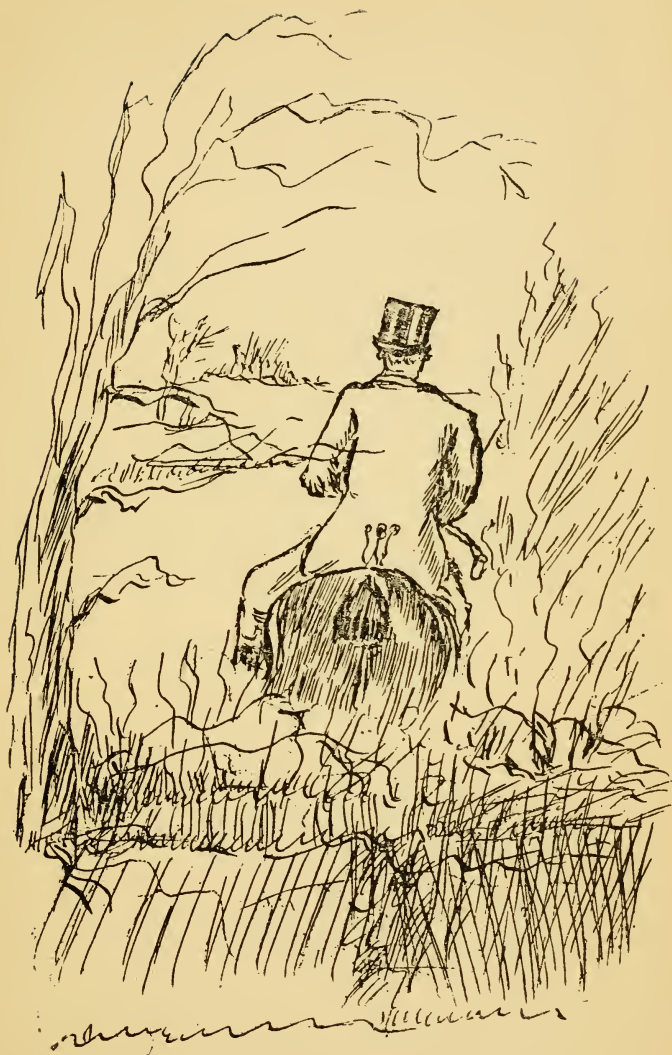
“Done as you told me, sir, and put ’em on the trees at once.”

I believe this episode appeared in *Punch*, with a drawing by Charles Keane, who was a friend of Mr. Montagu, the late Rector of Hawkwell, and the former occasionally stayed with him; and this neighbourhood provided material for many of his pictures in *Punch*.

So long as his health lasted, I cannot remember the run when Charles was not there, and it would be difficult to come across a field that he could not find a way out of. He had a horse called “Treacle,” generally known as the “Steam Roller,” and when he came to a nasty hairy, black fence which no one cared to tackle, Treacle would paw and stamp, and crawl until there was a hole big enough to drive a carriage and pair through. But oh! the horror of finding him in front of you, filling up the only gap, when your animal was a keen jumper, and one which

did not allow the grass to grow under its feet. At the best of times Treacle, as his name denotes never galloped any pace ; but Charles Tabor lost no time standing about ; he was always on the go. At three o'clock, unless hounds were running, the order was given for "home." We were a large party who went out from this side then, and when the command went forth, off we all started. Charles Tabor ruled the pace. When he said we will "spuffle" we spuffled—and what torture that sort of jog-trot is to a woman too ! And no one ever ventured to suggest the idea to deviate from the acknowledged shortcuts home. He was, I may say, without exception, the most agreeable companion I ever met, and I picked up a store of valuable information which I have never forgotten. We all had to price every field of cattle we passed. He was a first-rate farmer : his men used to say he could see more galloping across a field than any other man would find out walking round for a fortnight. An amateur agriculturalist was one day pointing out some poor, wretched-looking beasts ; they were in a pasture not good enough to keep a mouse ; he told us they were suffering from liver complaint. "Yes," replied Charles ; "I see : bilious with too rich living !"

For two or three years before his death he could only manage to trot ; galloping made him breathless. When at last he was forced to give up entirely, his absence caused a gap in our midst which has never been filled. His sound common-sense made him a power in Rochford Hundred.



CHARLES TABOR AND TREACLE.

There is a house not a hundred miles from here full of beautiful oak carving, besides being haunted; and Charles Tabor never failed to inform us as we passed it: "You see that house? Well, every crime under the sun has been committed, and all the commandments have been broken there."

Last summer I was attending an archæological meeting, and, wishing to display my local information to a stranger with whom I was conversing, I told him the foregoing about broken commandments, &c. The stranger replied: "I ought to know the place—it belonged to my family for a great number of years, and I happen to have been born there!"

I felt taken down considerably, and decided it was unsafe to talk to strangers at archæological meetings; one can never tell where they come from, and to what period they may belong.

LEICESTERSHIRE: GADDESBY HALL.

During '76 and three or four seasons following, I spent a great deal of time at Gaddesby Hall, in the heart of the Quorn country. The owner of Gaddesby was Mr. Cheney; in his younger days considered one of the finest light weight riders in Leicestershire. His father and my grandfather were in the Scots Greys together, and the friendship of the two families lasted until Mr. Cheney's death.

In a conservatory leading out of the dining room at Gaddesby Hall, there was a life-sized statue of Colonel Cheney with his horse. (He had three horses killed under him at Waterloo). The effect was very good when the conservatory was lighted up. It was the custom for all the men to dine in pink, and the whole thing was like an artistic scene out of a play. If the neighbours who came to dine only lived two or three miles away, like Mr. Jorrocks, "where they dined there they slept," bringing with them a whole retinue of men-servants and maids; the house must have been very elastic; it seemed to make no difference. In this way one met many very pleasant people. I had a great disappointment, and one I have never ceased to regret: Whyte-Melville was expected, and only at the last moment he sent a wire to say his aunt, or sister, or some relation, was dead.

One night I was sitting next to Sir Frederic Fowke; it suddenly dawned on him that I came from the wilds of Essex. He said: "I suppose you don't know a place called Hockley? There is a farm there named Smith's." I replied that I did know it very well. Mr. Jackson, who kept the beagles (commonly known as the Master of the Buck hounds) resided there. Sir Frederic said: "I am a trustee for that place; the property was left as a charity, and provides red cloaks and loaves for the deserving poor of Barsbury, in Leicestershire." Smith's Farm has lately been sold and cut up and laid out for building.

Loseby Hall, which belonged to the Fowkes family, was at one time rented by the great Lord Waterford, and was the scene of many of his exploits. I drove there to a meet with Colonel and Mrs. Burnaby, and Sir Frederic showed me the marks of "Cock Robin's" feet on the polished floor in the dining room, the story goes, after dinner, Lord Waterford and a party of friends, who had been dining well, but not too wisely, began betting on the performances of their horses. Lord Waterford said "Cock Robin" could beat any of them, so my Lord had a gate brought in, "Cock Robin" was fetched from his stable, and over the gate he jumped. Another of his bets was, he would drive to Melton, six miles straight across country, in his brougham. Four hunters were put in the carriage, but I don't think he got very far before the whole thing was smashed up.

One of his Lordship's customs was to ride a pony up the beautiful stone staircase. One night, being very far gone, he rode his horse up to the first floor and jumped over the bannisters. Needless to say, the horse was killed. I was so inspired by such wonderful tales that, on my return home, I was only prevented by the earnest entreaty of my father—who begged me not to do it—from riding an old horse called "Banker," up the stairs at the Lawn.

It was the custom on Sunday at Gaddesby to go round the stables. Mr. Cheney had twenty-five hacks and hunters for his own riding—and some beauties there were amongst them.

One especially fine animal, "Cannon Ball," always reminded me of the "clipper that stands in the stall at the top." Mr. Cheney gave £550 for him, but he lasted only a few seasons; he went in his wind, falling a victim to a man who knew too much and dosed him with cayenne pepper.

"Royalist" was another superb horse, and so was "Rebecca"; both these Captain Middleton wanted to buy for the Empress of Austria. It will be remembered that Bay Middleton was her pilot over the Shires.

One fine Sunday all the house-party were making the usual tour, when suddenly the wife of a General saw on the floor close to her an article of apparel which it was the horrid fashion in those days to wear. The wretched woman naturally supposed it was missing from her own attire, so she managed to whisk it under her skirts and bolted for the house, trusting—which was most unlikely—that the episode had been kept to herself alone. Her annoyance can easily be imagined when she discovered she had taken some one else's property, her own garment being in the proper place—where you would expect to find it. The owner of the missing article, who was in happy ignorance of her loss, knew nothing of the terrible thing which had befallen her until the missing article was brought back by the General's wife.

Before I leave the subject, I must tell you how my sister was taken in by Lord ——, very much given to playful jokes. At a dance at

the Vice-regal Lodge, Dublin, he crept quietly up to her and said: "Do you know you have dropped your bustle?"

But we must return to Gaddesby Sundays. Another visit we paid was to Mr. Cheney's famous herd of shorthorns. There was great tribulation when a "Duke of Geneva" was dying of inflammation of the lungs: kettles kept boiling day and night, and Mr. Cheney's own doctor in constant attendance. The bull, I believe, was worth thousands.

Shorthorns are most uninteresting beasts, and I can't say I appreciated that part of my visit. The herd was second only to the late Duke of Devonshire's.

There was tremendous excitement when the Prince of Wales (the late King) was expected to visit Gaddesby, and a gold dessert service was bought for the occasion. Poor Mr. Cheney found himself in a great fix. Only cream of the cream ever entered the doors. A fair lady arrived at the meet; he did not wish to be unkind, but neither did he intend to ask her in to the house, so he solved the difficulty by presenting her with a lovely bunch of roses.

At the time I am writing of, Mr. Copeland was Master and Tom Firr huntsman. I shall always look back to that period with profound veneration for Tom Firr; he was a fine huntsman, perfect horseman, and his voice was worth going a mile or two to hear. Amongst his many accomplishments he was a poet, and here are some of the lines he wrote:—

A BYE-DAY WITH THE QUORN.

My stud is nearly done up,
My sport must soon be spun up,
No such season have I seen
Since the day that I was born;
For a stable full of screws
Must give a man the blues
When he thinks he's bound to lose
A bye-day with the Quorn.

Heaving sighs both long and deep,
At the member's card I peep,
Giving Brooksby as the meet,
On this grand hunting morn.
I'll have a good look round,
They must go if lame or sound,
For on joining I am bound;
A bye day with the Quorn.

As along the road I jog
My nag goes with a nod,
Till I reach the place of meeting,
With the hounds upon the lawn.
Then he looks and gives a neigh,
And his lameness throws away;
Ah! at home he wouldn't stay
On a bye-day with the Quorn.

Orange gin my spirits healing,
To show there's no ill-feeling,
Ere I follow up my pets,
The bitches and the horn.
'Tis a field composed for sport,
Few of Friday's medley sort;
No crowd from streets or court
On a bye-day with the Quorn.

There's Cream Gorse in the distance
Which offers no resistance;
Full of foxes that will fly
At the sounding of the horn.
With a pack that truly race
Each man now takes his place,
For his heart is in the chase
On a bye-day with the Quorn.

Say, can anything surpass
A gallop o'er the grass,
Hounds straining, horses racing,
The coldest blood grows warm.
We charge each rasping double,
No fear, nor thought of trouble.
Ah, give me sixteen couple
And a bye-day with the Quorn.

Then my day's sport being over,
And my spirits all in clover,
Feeling young, fresh and happy
As the day that I was born,
I order up a jumper,
And fill myself a thumper,
Drinking hunting in a bumper,
And a bye-day with the Quorn.

1877.

(Taken from *The Field*.)

Our Quorn bye-day was at Gaddesby, the "saddle and sirloin" of the hunt: for Mr. Cheney's deeds in the one are only surpassed by his wonderful success in producing the other, and as we journey from the Hall I see the rostrum where the auctioneer more than once dispersed the herd of shorthorns to all quarters of the globe. But before leaving the Hall I

had a peep at the marble equestrian statue of the late Colonel Cheney (I believe of the Scots Greys) who had three horses shot under him at Waterloo, the statue shows him on his last horse which is wounded, and though only a Captain, he rode off the field in command of the regiment. A fine work of art and memento of a brave man.

Cream Gorse—suggestive of rich pastures and fine old Stilton cheese—has nothing of the kind to recommend it. What I have seen of its surroundings has been the dirty plough and very poor pasture land; but there stands the gorse, and there lie the foxes, thanks to the owner, who, they tell me, is a good sportsman, who hunts himself and takes a pride in finding foxes for other people's enjoyment.

There was not a good scent in or out of cover, and a slow hunting run right down into the valley of the Wreake, close to Kirby Park, was our first attempt—Tom Firr giving his fox credit for having crossed the river, which it turned out he never did, as we found him tucked away in a pig-stye in Kirby village as we came back, and hounds had their luncheon. Ashby Pastures (classic ground), vide the great run therefrom in the *Quarterly Review* years ago) was our next venture, and a very fair fifteen minutes, and to ground in a gravel hill below Thorpe finished that little scurry. But Thorpe Trussells is handy, and as we cross over the railway cutting close to the cover, we see that since we were last there the "American Devil," as the steam digger is called, has made much way in opening the line. Verily we live in the

age of steam. But, hark! hounds are at him, and away he goes over the road—a tempting jump into the stubbles, but not so easy as it looks; then down to a copse in a corner, and away to the left over the line, and under Thorpe, past Adams Gorse; and crossing by the top end of the Melton Steeplechase course, he goes over that superb line of old pastureland, leaving Burrough village to the right; and as we mount the hill, we think that there is no cover within three miles of him in front, and hope for the best. But the fox was too deep for us, and up at the Twyford Road he gives us the slip and all is over.

1877.

MEET OF THE QUORN HOUNDS AT GADDESBY HALL.

Thursday, April 6th, the Quorn hounds met at Gaddesby, the seat of Mr. Cheney. The time of meeting was one p.m., which gave everyone a chance to attend. The owner of Gaddesby extended his hospitality to all classes, and it was consequently nearly half-past one before hounds threw off. They went first to draw Cream Gorse, and as they crossed the fields that separate it from the place of meeting, it was evident that all the hunting world from these parts intended to have the last gallop of the season with the Quorn. Amongst those present were Mr. Coupland (the Master), Lords Grey and Wicklow, Sir F. Fowke, Sir A.

Palmer, Sir B. and Lady Florence Dixie, Sir Henry Des Voeux, Mrs. Sloane Stanley, the Messrs. Story, Miss Story, Captain and Mrs. Barnett, Mr. E. Chaplin, Miss Elmhurst, Captain and the Hon. Mrs. Molyneaux, and hosts of others.

Cream Gorse did not keep us long waiting, and a fox was quickly away. He headed at first for Ashby Pastures, and most of us thought it was his point; but he turned towards Kirby Lodges, and then ran slowly towards Kirby Bellars. Here pug again turned and ran nearly to Cream Gorse. The riding now over plough was simply killing, the rain of the last hours having been so sharp as to render the "going" worse than ever. Though the pace was not fast, the field "tailed" tremendously, and when they got on grass, with stiff fencing, a large number of falls from pumped horses was the result. They skirted the Brookby Spinneys and ran merrily towards Queniborough. Before, however, crossing the road, they bore to the left, and skirting the village of Gaddesby, carried the line to a large field above the Hall. Here, from information received, hounds were not allowed to persevere, as it was suspected that a vixen was before them. Queniborough Spinneys were blank, and a move was made to Barkby Holt. The new covert was tried, and a fox immediately found; but scent in covert being bad, it was some minutes before Reynard could be induced to break. At last he did, and hounds being quickly on the line, they raced at best pace in the direction of South Croxton.

This they skirted and then bore slightly to the left, where the Queniborough brook had to be jumped. Great numbers went at it, and most got over, though I saw one luckless one taking a cold bath, and several hind legs were too near the edge to be satisfactory to themselves or their riders. This crossed, hounds were a good field in front of anyone, and a follow-my-leader business was not conducive to getting on better terms. Fortunately they came to a check at the Queniborough Road, and followed again a fair start for all. This road they crossed, and when close to Gaddesby, pug was headed, and running straight back, was run into and killed by three of four couple. It was short but brilliant, and lasted about seventeen minutes.

It was then decided that Bleakmore should be called on. It being out of the way, many retired, but those who persevered were rewarded. Two foxes were quickly away, and the one on which the hounds settled ran along the railway and up to the Melton Road. He, however, dodged back, and ran towards Brooksby, then down to the Wreake; but the recent rains had increased its proportions, and Reynard refused to face it. He bore to the left (after furnishing a most enjoyable gallop) and got back to a small spinney on the line. Numbers now galloped down the line, and meanwhile a train was seen coming up. The field were in all directions, but those on the rail line (though in danger from passing trains) were better placed. It was much feared that the fox must now be chopped; but he broke, and

crossing the line and Melton Road, skirted Rearsby, which was on the left. Here hounds checked, but pug had had his last run, and whilst Tom Firr was casting in front, was killed by the tail hounds in Mr. Hassell's shrubbery. So ended the day—alas! the last one of the Quorn; and everyone went home keener than ever, and looking forward to the time when we shall see our beauties again, and hear the cheery voice of Tom Firr.

VISITS OF THE BENSON FAMILY TO THE LAWN.

We got a letter from my sister saying they had taken second leave, and would like to come to The Lawn on a three months' visit. We replied to the effect that nothing would give us more pleasure than to receive the whole party. We were taken at our word, and in due course there arrived at Southend Station my sister, her husband, and her only son. I regret to say this boy was one of the many victims of the South African War. He was a Captain in the Coldstream Guards, and just before he went out he passed an examination at the Staff College, which was described to me by Sir Evelyn Wood in the following words: "He has not gone through a gap but jumped a stiff post and rails." But I must return to our visitors. Four horses and a pony, man and maid, two soldier servants, one goat, three dogs (one was a white poodle, named "Zulu" by my sister

before she saw him)—“Scrap,” and “Mite,” a Yorkshire terrier.

“Mite” was a tiny dog weighing about one pound. What breed I don’t know, but in appearance he was very odd, as he was clipped to match the poodle. Three birds and two mice completed the party, and luggage to correspond.

The next morning the meet was at “The Shepherd and Dog,” Crays Hill. So off we went, my father driving a high old phaeton. You could turn it about as you liked; on this occasion the hood was on the back seat. My mother went with us. For some unknown reason one of the Lancer men had been sent on with the horses; he did not know his way, and after an agonizing half-hour at “The Shepherd and Dog”—where, needless to say, no horses were to be found—he turned up, having entirely lost himself and gone round by Pitsea. There was not much doing all the first part of the day. Scent was poor, no doubt the rain which came down in the afternoon had something to do with it. Anyhow, matters improved when we found a fox in Lady Wood, ran through Swan Wood, Bretts, Cowbridge, on to Ingrave, through Thorndon Park, out the Childerditch side, back to the Park, ran round several times; when, as it was getting dark and rain coming down in torrents, we said we would go home. By the time we got through Herongate to the cross roads—one way going to Billericay by Bottle-down Hill, the other to Wickford by Dunton Blacksmiths and the Fortune of War—It was too dark to see the signpost, and I did not know

my way about thirty years ago as well as I do now. Fortunately there was a cottage at the corner, and after a great deal of trouble we got the people to come and tell us which road to take for Wickford. To add to our trials, the horse I was riding was just about done up, lame, and at any time a shocking bad hack. He had landed over several fences on his head—in fact, it had been quite a mercy that he possessed a head to make use of for that purpose. Well, all things bad and good have an ending, so did our ride, and we got to Wickford drenched to the skin, and we were very glad to borrow clothes from Mrs. Bull, the landlady of the Castle Inn, and her maid, Julia—they were both portly persons, and, at the time I write of, we were slim. I leave it to my reader's imagination to picture what we looked like. The horses had to remain at the Castle Inn till Sunday afternoon, the floods were too high for them to get through. It was only by not letting the grass grow under our feet over our toilet that *we* managed to get away in the carriage. Never after that day did I start out hunting without a bag of clothes. In fact, the next hunting day Bessie said, "Got your things, Gus?" "I have," I replied. But she went one better than I, she had taken her "nighty"!

One day soon after, the neighbourhood was plunged into great excitement. The Parson's house had been broken into by burglars. The Inspector came up to consult my father; such a thing as burglary was unknown in these quiet districts where many of the farm labourers had



MRS. BENSON ON BULLY.

never so much as been to London, and policemen still wore tall hats, the same as used to figure largely in pantomimes. Such a terrible affair as a burglary was discussed in every possible detail. A few days after the Inspector arrived and had another interview with my father. This time he was most apologetic, and begged that nothing further in the matter should be done, as from "information received," the burglars were none other than the two soldier servants we had staying in the house, they had been "visiting" the Parson's maids! The whole affair was kept dark, and I was the only member of the household who was let into the secret, and I expect my father did that to prevent my pursuing further investigations. He knew, too, how once I was bound to silence, neither wild horses or the rack, or anything else would make me give the show away.

1877.

THE ESSEX UNION HOUNDS.

(From *The Field*.)

which met for the last day of a bad cub hunting season at Hutton Railway Arch on Saturday, November 3rd. The hounds were thrown into Arnold Wood, one of the many certain finds on Lord Petre's large estate. A brace of foxes broke on the Hutton side, on one of which the hounds settled, and drove through Mr. Johnson's grounds to Brockley Grove, on to Ingrave Thrift, where he tried the door of his native

home, but the heat this time was too much for him, and he went on, leading his pursuers through Thorndon Park to Childerditch Wood, away over the large fields to near the old steeplechase course, then to East Horndon, across Dunton Hall, where he was viewed toiling forward under a July sun to Westwood Shaw, Laindon Hills. Away at the lower end to Bushy Lees, across Major Spitty's farm to the Southend railway, where the hounds got a view, and raced him for a mile between the metals to Vange, where he turned to Fobbing Mill, on to Whitehall Marshes, over the creek to Thames Haven Station, then to Stanford-le-Hope, and at last, as several foxes were on foot, the hounds were stopped at Mr. Long's farm, and this good fox was left in his glory, to the great disappointment of the Master; but with the wind behind him and a choking hot sun in front, the hounds could never press their fox sufficiently, though many times during the sporting run he seemed doomed to be killed, but he never gave Mr. White a chance, as he had the wind behind him from find to finish. The distance the hounds ran must have been at least twenty miles, as by the map it is fifteen miles from Arnold Wood to Thames Haven Station. Most of the prominent members of the Hunt and many ladies were present, amongst whom were the Hon. Bernard Petre, son of the good Lord Petre, to whom this hunt is greatly indebted for his strict preservation of foxes, Mr. Edward Courage, Mr. Ind and his son, Mr. and Miss Caldicott, Mr. Cotton, a

grand old Madras civilian, who goes as straight as a dart, young Mr. Richard Walmsley, the brothers Lescher, the hard-riding Saunders, Captain Helme and his sister, mounted splendidly. The former on a white-legged horse, Mr. Helme, as neat as any man could be, Mrs. E. Helme, Miss Tawke and many others.

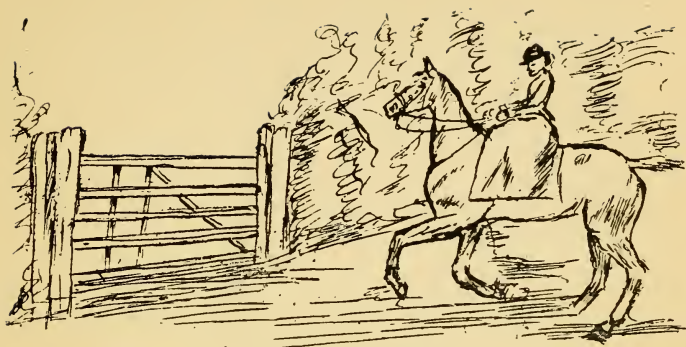
1877.

THE ESSEX UNION FOXHOUNDS.

(From *The Field*.)

There were out, Captain and Mrs. Goodeve, Miss Tawke, Mrs. Dewi, Colonel Ravenhill, Major Nolan, M.P., Colonel Marshall, Messrs. Baker (two), Phillips, Tabor, Benson, Grayson, Belcham, Hudson, Webster, Rickett, Walls, Bishop, Harrington, Walker, Webster, Moss, and a great many more. Our first draw was some cole seed at Rochford Hall, which did not yield as good a crop in foxes as I hope it may seed when the time comes, for blank was written upon it; so likewise in the cole seed at Prittlewell. This is owing solely to a wet night, for foxes, as "Jorrocks" says, "like damp beds as little as Christians." So away we go for the Bull Wood, passing several small woods on our way. This is our last hope, and things look bad; but just as people were getting out sandwiches and flasks, a welcome challenge is heard, which is at first thought to be "only a

puppy after a hare." Our veteran whip (Joe Bailey) knows the voice, however, and cheers on the pack, which endorse the whimper, and our Master, who did not hear the good news welcomed, now flings in the main body of his forces. "Now, ye doubting souls, where are all your pains, I, as Beckford says. A quick scurry round the wood, and out towards Hadleigh; but our ringing fox takes us back again, and all hope of a run seems gone. One young lady, well known with this hunt and the Quorn, unfortunately came to grief here at a gate on rising ground with a bad take off. Fortunately no bones are broken or life lost, but odds were laid in favour of either one or the other. Let me remind the fair rider that "discretion is the better part of valour." On we go, however, and a fast run takes place round Mr. Wendon's farm, still pointing for Hadleigh; but still pug cannot make up his mind to fairly get away more than four fields from the great Bull Woods. Back he comes, therefore, hounds running with an improvement of scent, but on gaining covert scent is not good, and we slowly hunt him round from point to point—now a holloa: then a whimper,—and many say "Good-bye." "Can't do anything to-day." "Getting late." "I'm off." Not so the men who know Captain White and the Essex Union Hounds. About a dozen say, "Let's see the end," and in less time than it takes me to write, the fox is away for Hockley Church, in the opposite direction from that in which we came, the hounds having forced him through the covert. There are but few with



ANTICIPATION.



RESULT.

them (including Mrs. Goodeve, who is always well to the fore, and handles her horse with great judgment and skill, never expecting too much from a willing horse), and a real hunting run we have by Blunt's Wood, which we do not enter, and on towards Down Hall. One or two men are down in the brook by way of a "refresher," but all join in the run at Hambro Hill. The hounds here do their work admirably, hunting inch by inch, for it is a regular horrid day, and right well does our worthy Master "let 'em alone." (I fancy myself that he has been "crossing" with the Bramham Moor). Forward on we go then for the "Drover's Arms," at the back of which he doubles into a furze fence, up which he runs, and to ground near Hambro Hill. Thus we accounted for our fox. After thinking it all over and sitting with my pipe before the fire, I come to the conclusion that Shakespeare was not far wrong when he said—
"All's well that ends well."

1877.

ESSEX UNION FOXHOUNDS.

On Wednesday, March 14th, these hounds met at Rayleigh. There was a large field assembled, including Messrs. C. and A. Tabor, Tawke, Winmill, Coles, Webster and many more.

We first of all drew several small woods without finding, although foxes are said to have been running in all directions by several trust-

worthy foot people. The hounds at last found, about two o'clock, in Hockley Bull Wood, just as everyone was thinking of going home, and away we go at a good pace for Merrylands, Hockley Hall, and to within a field of Plum-borough Wood, then on to a wood I believe called Crab's Wood. Here he laid up in a ditch, but the "little loders" pushed him out and forced him into the open for Hockley Hall Wood, through which they take him at a clinking pace up wind for Hockley Church, over the road, apparently for Blount's Wood; but disdaining its temporary shelter he went (still up wind) for Down Hall, the pack going like hounds should go. From Down Hall he goes over the Rayleigh Cricket Ground, and pointing for Great Wheatleys, but, finding some big hedgerows in that direction, he lays up for a minute. This is a bad move for him as the beauties are on too good terms with our hero for these tricks, so "up you get or I'll make you," says Redwing (or one of the others). Up he gets therefore, in front of the veteran Joe Bailey (the whip) and comes through Mr. Henson's meadow, past the Rayleigh Gas Works, into the road in view of the leading hounds. Here all seemed over, but poor pug had two minutes more to live, for he managed to get through a broken gate and across a small field into a cottage garden; but not knowing where he was, he turned back, and was killed in the meadow fairly after a run of one hour, four minutes. This turned out to be a fine dog fox, and as good a one as ever was cubbed, and my

only hope is that he has left some of his race in the land of the living. The pace from Blounts to Rayleigh was simply appalling for any fox, let alone horses; but our Essex men and horses are bad ones to beat, as was proved by Messrs. A. and C. Tabor, M. Baker, a gentleman from Vange, and others.

A better day in the Rochford country we have not had this year; and if we can only get Mr. White down here oftener, our joy will be complete. We have already signs in the neighbourhood that the foxes do not mean to retire into private life (at all events without providing a place of shelter for the "missus") as the earths are drawn in several places; so all we want for next season are the hounds. A subscription to foxhounds is better than a doctor's bill, and you must have one or the other: so choose for yourselves which it is to be, says "Squills."

1877.

ESSEX UNION FOXHOUNDS.

On Monday, February 12th, these hounds met at the Lawn, Rochford.

To say the least of it, the Clerk of the weather was anything but accommodating, as befitted his high office, and the day was not very bright, but like the eel in the frying pan—this kind of weather is nothing when you are used to it, and as we are not made of salt or sugar we do not melt very easily.

There were present of the field proper:—

Captain White (the Master), Messrs. C. A. Tabor, S. S. Baker, Drs. Marshall, Bourne, R.A., Messrs. Gale, Offin, Webster, F. M. Baker, May, Ventris, Hardy, Watts, Dixey, Miss Tawke and lots more (pardon me not remembering their names).

About 11.30 the hounds were thrown into Potash Wood, where we quickly found a grand fox, known by the name of the "old customer," owing to his having afforded us some capital runs on previous occasions, but always evaded his pursuers when nearly "done" close to where he was found. This time, however, he had rather a hard time of it, for, breaking away to the south towards Rochford, he took us at a good pace for Rochford Hall; before getting actually up to the buildings of that historical mansion, he turned to the right over the Hall Road by Leicester Mead, and pointing for Westbarrow Hall, running round the farm buildings, he pointed for Cherry Tree Farm, and so on to Mr. Fred Stallibrass's over the brook, and through Mr. Cotton's grove, from there on to Potash Wood, thus making a complete circle. Our first real check here took place, as he had gained five or ten minutes by running some spinneys, but, making a capital cast, Captain White made his ground good all round this fifty acre wood and discovered that our customer had quietly laid himself down close to where he was found. The hounds soon hunted up to him, although the rain was coming down and the wind blowing "great guns." A tally on the Lawn side set us all on the go again,

and away we go past the Mansion for the Rev. B. Cotton's grove. Not entering this, however, he pointed for the Scrubs, leaving Primrose Wood on his right; through the Scrubs he goes for Dark Wood, and so on to Hockley Bull Wood. Now came a serious time, hounds running in all directions, foxes too—a trying time for a Master's temper just as his fox is done. It cannot be helped, however, and to make a long story short we changed foxes. "How about the customer you started with?" says a lady. "Oh, never mind him now," for the Master is off and away with a fresh fox, and only eleven and a half couple of hounds pointing to Mr. Wendon's farm, and on good terms with his fox. Then, turning to Noble's Green, the fox took us (at a fair hunting pace) over the Eastwood, Rayleigh road for Pound Wood. Running through this we found ourselves in the Hadleigh coverts, hunting inch by inch over the dead leaves. He was viewed away in front of the hounds for Eastwood, passing to the left of Mr. Skilton's, over the road to Nobles Green, and so on to Scrub Wood, which he did not enter, but ran up the side of, then to the right, and to the ground in Primrose Wood in a rabbit hole, from which the hounds with a little assistance drew him. "There's another fox in," says somebody. "All right," says the Master, "let him alone, and we'll have a run after it." Too late, however, for "Royal" had drawn him alone, and so two foxes are broken up at the same time. As to the other hounds left in the Bull Wood, they appear to have had a good

time of it; but running round and round, they did not account for the customer, although he was dead beat and viewed several times across the drives. At the death all hounds put in their appearance; so, possibly, though I don't think it likely, both portions of the pack ran their fox into the same earth. We then adjourned once more to the Lawn. A never failing covert was then drawn, and all the biped pack had a regular merry time over the good things provided. Casualties were not worth mentioning; one horse hurt his shoulder, and the usual falls took place owing to horses being pumped. Mr. Bourne and Dr. Marshall were well to the fore, as also the lady on Old Joe. The Master was always there, but that is perfectly unnecessary to state, as upon all occasions he is ready to lend his hounds a helping hand when at fault, and this cannot be done in this land of the steam plough without consummate skill in handling your horse as well as your hounds. Foxes are exceedingly plentiful about the Rochford country, and it is to be hoped that Captain White will bring his hounds down here as often as he possibly can; the big woodlands require hunting at least once a week in order to get the foxes to fly. Too much praise cannot be bestowed upon those gentlemen who so kindly allow their land to be ridden over, and also for their preservation of foxes; for I must tell you that as soon as it was generally understood that Captain White would bring his pack into Rochford Hundred, the idea was hailed with delight; and now we have the best head of

foxes in the country over which he presides, and all are pleased to see him and to render him every assistance they possibly can. Finally, so long as the country is regularly hunted by a good man like our worthy Master, Captain White, so long will foxes be plentiful; and the foxes will also be proud to yield up their brushes, says a near neighbour of The Old Customer.

LAYS OF THE ESSEX UNION HUNT.

1878.

If my Muse will permit me, I'll sing of a Hunt,
Which, though "swells" may abuse, can well bear the
brunt;

It lies between Thames and the Great Eastern Line,
Though sporting, 'tis heavy, and shows sport divine.

Rides up to the Meet, the Master, Bill White,
He's dapper and courteous—his weight very light—
'Tis a picture to see him sail along on his grey,
When the pack press their fox on a good scenting day.

"Who's his Whip?" says a stranger, who has run
down from Town;

Why the "Veteran Joe," of South Essex renown—
Full thirty-four seasons he has seen with the pack,
Though this is the last we shall hear his whip crack.

And now of the Field, let us see who is here;
We know a good many, but not all I fear.
First the ladies I'll mention, their number is small,
But rare ones to go, and care nought for a fall.

There's a wee one from Rochford, her weight must be
nil,

But she rides her good chestnut with courage and skill.
The fences are nothing to her when hounds run;
I'll back her to see all the best of the fun.

The fair one from Boxted, how well she is dres'd,
She e'er holds her own with those that go best,
She sits like a workman on that bonny black steed,
On him, of a pilot she cannot have need.

From Shoebury, too, comes a Gunner's fair wife,
Who verily rides as if no care in life
Could stop her from jogging some miles on to cover,
To join the pursuit of the little Red Rover.

Another I see, on a raw three year old,
Methinks she must be a trifle too bold,
Yet she has such fine hands, and a beautiful seat,
That to see her on horseback is really a treat;
Better known, perhaps, in show yards than at side of
the cover—
She is equally good at one or the other.

On a prize-taking cob, whose colour is bay,
Comes a lady who has "gone" very well in her day;
With a "Helm" for her pilot, she sailed gaily along,
But now she declares "that her nerve is quite gone."

The sterner sex now let us try to describe,
They are, I confess, a most numerous tribe;
Well mounted are most, on a good useful hunter—
A man in this country must not be a funkier.

There's the son of the Laird of Thorndon's fair park,
He is keen for the sport from morning till dark,
For his ancestry ever were fond of the chase,
And the staunchest of friends to the sly vulpine race.

Old Belhus, too, sends us a sportsman as keen,
His family, too, of the Hunt have e'er been
The strongest supporters. Mind, go to the Sale
If you wish to be carried in Down land or Vale.

The Squire of Runwell—his covers ne'er fail
A good fox to provide for the Hanningfield vale—
He's a marvellous man to of Charles get a view,
And many a fox his view halloo must rue.

From Weald, too, hails one who comes of a line
Of real good fox hunters; hark back a long time!
He's off to East Essex, may he see the sport there
Of which in South Essex he has had a fair share.

Here's the M.P. for Middlesex on a slashing fine bay,
Who carries him well thro' the deep Essex clay;
He's as keen as a young 'un for the noblest of sport,
May him his constituents always support!

His son, too, looks in sometimes from the Shires,
And seems to care nought for the rough Essex briars;
He shows us his coat tails whate'er be his mount—
The number of fences he jumps I can't count.

What a good weight-carrier! his colour is grey,
His rider has plenty of "Courage" they say,
A first-rate supporter of E. Union Hunt,
If money is wanted he's e'er to the front.

From Boyles come the brothers we all know so well,
Both very good sportsmen—a tyro might tell.
We thank them for many a capital run,
From Blunt's Wall or Arnold's we've seen some good
fun.

The Squire of Woodham, and his sons, too, are out,
Keen sportsmen the trio, of that there's no doubt;
How many a run they give us from Hazeleigh—
I have seen one and all go uncommon bravely.

Then Durwards turns out one in faultless attire,
His pluck and his get-up we all must admire,
Long may his stable hold the gallant rat-tail,
Who carries his owner o'er fences and rail.

A quartet from Warley—a father and sons—
All capital rides who see the good runs.
No more popular man than the Squire of Warley,
We wish that the gout didn't try him so sorely.

From Marshalls here's one whose appearance is rare,
For fox-hunting he does not very much care;
He loves a straight gallop with staghounds I know,
And with them he knows very well how to go.

There's a father and son from where "Love" grows
so "True,"

Both fond of the sport—we want like them a few—
The father has seen some sport in his day,
And loves to talk over the runs o'er the clay.
What a workman the son is! and fond of a hound—
He knows most of their names, of that I'll be bound.

A long man from Writtle goes boldly to hounds,
To his humour and chaff there are no sort of bounds;
He always dispenses with spurs and with whip,
And seems to care little or nought for a "pip."

Oh! Tabor of Baddow, I envy you daily,
That rattling black horse that carries you gaily;
How you love if you can, to find some stiff rails
To pound the field over—your horse never fails.

The barracks at Warley, too, give us some men,
Who to beat, is a difficult task, that I ken;
The "56th" Captain, on a brave little bay,
And the "North Lincoln" Captain, you can't beat I say.

Here's another good sportsman we're all glad to greet,
He hails from near Brentwood, they call it Brook Street,
For a young 'un that wants a little good schooling,
Ask him to ride him—he's not given to fooling.

What day is it? Saturday. Surely I see
The father of the Hunt come out for a spree;
He's a son of David—a rare good old sort—
And for years and for years has been fond of the sport.

All alert for the fun from Springfield comes one,
And with him a lady who loves a good run;
He knows a good horse, and, in spite of his weight,
Is able to guide his companion quite straight.

Here's a "Welter" from Warley, on a good sturdy
black,
No one more enjoys a good day with the pack.
Years ago with "The Essex" he often was out,
Now he swears by "The Union," of that there's no
doubt.

The London Division are here pretty strong,
Mr. Saunders among them, who never goes wrong;
Whate'er be the country, whate'er be the pace,
He is sure to be found in a very front place.

The Doctors' profession is well represented,
They always are out when they are not prevented.
Which of the number to ride is the harder—
Marshall of Wickford, or Billericay Carter?

From the "Hatch of the Pilgrim" comes a neat man,
His name I won't mention, for guess it you can;
He rides his brown hunter with judgment and care,
He knows well his value—he's a "sort" very rare.

There's a Paddy from Brentwood, who's fond of the
chase,
The belle Emerald Isle ever boasts a keen race.
With the staghounds he used to go very well,
Now he's sure to be in at Reynard's death knell.

Old Hornchurch sends three, who each ride a grey:
They are bound to drop in for a pretty long day;
May they stick to the sport and never say die!
And long hear of the pack the melodious cry!

From Mascalls here's one, who has joined us of late:
With Essex and hunting he has cast in his fate;
Excuse an old line—I must beat a retreat—
"He's a good'un to follow: a bad'un to beat!"

I must not forget the Vet., Henry L——,
Who always has got a nice one to sell;
His hands and his nerve are uncommonly good—
He cuts out the work, whate'er be his mood.

Of Yeomen, I am sorry to say, we've but few,
But those that we have are good men and true—
Davis, Crush, Asplin, Offin, and Gale—
They all go like birds in the South Essex vale.

Danbury's fair Common sends a Captain who's
"Rash"—

I'm afraid he will say I have written real trash,
For of sportsmen and sport he knows well how to write,
Of his hunting descriptions we oft have a sight.

I must close up my tale with the Hunt Secretary,
Who constantly says the subscriptions do vary.
In his love for the sport to no man he yields—
He hopes for subscriptions and jolly large fields.

WHO-WHOOP !

CONCLUSION.

The first of my series of Hunting Recollections is finished, but I hope, if you have not found the present volume very tedious, you will have patience, and remember how trying is the day on which one resumes hunting at the beginning of the season. One is unused to saddles and clothes, and even the horses show an unpleasant mixture of laziness and bumptiousness. We are none of us sorry to find the day is over, but when the business becomes a little more familiar again, it is quite a different thing, and so I hope the next volume will not be so irksome, and scent will improve as the season advances.

“Hunting Recollections,”

BY

Miss TAWKE.

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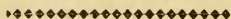
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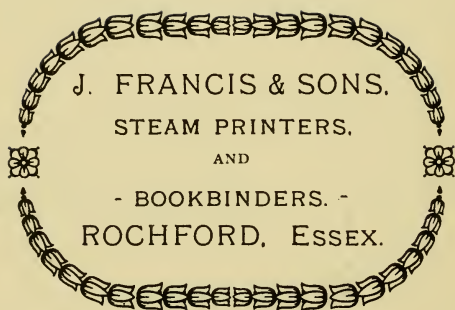
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